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General Assembly

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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Resolution adopted by the Special Committee at its 6th meeting, on 10 June 2002

Special Committee decision of 21 June 2001 concerning Puerto Rico

The Special Committee,

Bearing in mind the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, as well as the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Considering that the decade of the 1990s was proclaimed by the General Assembly, in its resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, as the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and that by resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000, the General Assembly declared the period 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,

Bearing in mind the 20 resolutions and decisions adopted by the Special Committee on the question of Puerto Rico, contained in the reports of the Special Committee to the General Assembly,

Recalling that 25 July 2002 marks the one hundred and fourth anniversary of the intervention in Puerto Rico by the United States of America,

Also recalling the diverse initiatives taken by the political representatives of Puerto Rico and the United States in recent years, which have thus far failed to set in motion the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

Stressing the need for the United States to lay the groundwork for the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Taking into account the measures recently adopted by both Chambers of the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico recommending the convening of a Status

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Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico as part of the search for procedures that would make it possible to launch the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

Aware that Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, has been used for over 60 years by the United States Marines to carry out military manoeuvres, thereby limiting access by the civilian population to an area equivalent to barely a quarter of the island, with negative consequences for the health of the population, the environment and the economic and social development of the Territory,

Regretting that the Government of the United States continues its military manoeuvres and bombings on Vieques Island, which is inhabited, removing and incarcerating hundreds of peaceful demonstrators, including political figures, and imposing further restrictions on the civilian population,

Noting the intention expressed by the President of the United States to put an end to the military manoeuvres on Vieques by 1 May 2003 or earlier,

Further noting the consensus among the people as well as within the Government of Puerto Rico on the urgency of halting the military manoeuvres on Vieques Island and on the return of the occupied land to the people of Puerto Rico,

Bearing in mind that an official referendum called by the Government of Puerto Rico on 29 July 2001 showed that an overwhelming majority of the people of Vieques are in favour of an immediate, permanent halt to military manoeuvres on Vieques,

Noting the consensus among the people of Puerto Rico in favour of the release of all Puerto Rican political prisoners who are serving sentences in United States prisons for cases related to Puerto Rico's independence,

Recalling the release of 11 Puerto Rican political prisoners in 2000,

Noting that the final document of the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cartagena (Colombia) on 8 and 9 April 2000,[1] the final communiqué of the Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in New York on 14 November 2001,[2] and the final communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Durban (South Africa) from 27 to 29 April 2002, reaffirm the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and request the Special Committee to continue actively pursuing the issue of Puerto Rico,

Having heard statements and testimonies representative of various viewpoints among the people of Puerto Rico and their social institutions,

Having considered the report of the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the implementation of the resolutions concerning Puerto Rico,[3]

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution

[1] A/54/917-S/2000/580, annex.
[2] A/56/682-S/2001/1159, annex.
[3] A/AC.109/2002/L.4.

1514 (XV) and the applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution to the question of Puerto Rico;

2. *Reiterates* that the Puerto Rican people constitute a Latin American and Caribbean nation that has its own unequivocal national identity;

3. *Calls upon* the Government of the United States of America to assume its responsibility of expediting a process that will allow the Puerto Rican people fully to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico;

4. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in recent years, progress has been achieved towards the implementation of a mechanism that would ensure the full participation of representatives of all viewpoints prevailing in Puerto Rico, such as the proposals to convene a status Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico;

5. *Reiterates* the hope that the General Assembly will give comprehensive consideration to the question of Puerto Rico in all its aspects;

6. *Urges* the Government of the United States, in line with the need to guarantee the Puerto Rican people their legitimate right to self-determination and the protection of their human rights, to order an immediate halt to its armed forces' military drills and manoeuvres on Vieques Island, which is inhabited, return the occupied land to the people of Puerto Rico, halt the persecution, incarceration, arrests and harassment of peaceful demonstrators, immediately release all persons incarcerated in this connection, respect fundamental human rights, such as the right to health and economic development, and decontaminate the impact areas;

7. *Requests* the President of the United States of America to release all Puerto Rican political prisoners serving sentences in United States prisons for cases related to the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico;

8. *Notes with satisfaction* the report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee,[3] in compliance with its resolution of 21 June 2001;

9. *Requests* the Rapporteur to report to the Special Committee in 2003 on the implementation of the present resolution;

10. *Decides* to keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuous review.